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**THE COUNCIL
OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

July 1, 2020

The Honorable Bill de Blasio
Mayor of New York City
NYC City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor de Blasio:

As you know all too well, the City is suffering from the worst public health crisis and economic crisis this city has faced in decades.

There are no easy playbooks for navigating the challenges we now face but New Yorkers expect their government to do everything in its power to develop a plan, communicate it clearly, seek feedback, and work hard to execute it quickly and efficiently.

As Chair of the Land Use Committee, I take the Council's responsibility to execute the charter mandated land use functions very seriously. Although land use projects can generate controversy and debate, they are also one of the important tools we have to plan for our current and future needs – housing, economic development, schools, among many other considerations. Those conversations can be hard but they are only more important in a moment when we as a city are approaching unemployment numbers we haven't seen since the Great Depression.

Over ten weeks ago, the Mayor issued an executive order to pause the ULURP clocks and since then the City Planning Commission has not met. In that time, the Council has convened hearings and taken actions on land use items and legislation. The Board of Standards and Appeals is meeting electronically, as is the Landmarks Preservation Commission. Furthermore, many volunteer Community Boards are meeting as well.

As a former district manager of a Bronx Community Board 2– the borough impacted the most by this terrible epidemic – I know the challenges Board's and communities face but we all have to step up and the City Planning Commission is no exception. We need to get back to business of advancing projects which will help lay the foundation for an equitable economic recovery.

In order to do this I propose:

- 1) The City Planning Commission begin meeting immediately, and where necessary, more frequently than on its twice a month cycle to begin to make decisions about which project will support this recovery and get those to the Council for final action.

- 2) The Commission should be taking action on those items where community boards have already acted – the remaining stakeholders in the ULURP process, the Borough Presidents, City Planning Commission, and City Council all have paid staff that have the capacity to do their job.
- 3) The City Planning Commission should begin the ULURP process for new projects in close consultation with the Council, Borough Presidents, and affected community boards immediately. In districts where Community Boards don't have the capacity to hold a hearing electronically, we should work with them to provide the technical support. The Council is ready to support in whatever we can with our resources.

New Yorkers expect government to be doing everything we can to begin the process of laying out a plan for our future. It's time to get back to work.

Sincerely,



Rafael Salamanca, Jr.
Council Member, 17th District, The Bronx

cc: Vicki Been, Deputy Mayor, Housing and Economic Development
Marisa Lago, Director, Department of City Planning